



THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA POSITION PAPER

The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulating responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results. The Garden Club of America is a nonpartisan, issue-oriented advocate for a beautiful, healthy planet.

OCEANS

The Garden Club of America recognizes that oceans are the largest ecosystem, covering nearly three-quarters of the Earth's surface. Healthy oceans are the life support system for our planet. Oceans hold 97 percent of the Earth's water and are home to more than a million species of plants and animals.

The U.S. coastline territory covers 3.4 million square miles. Seagrasses, mangroves, and salt marshes along the coasts capture and hold carbon at a much faster rate than forests, and, if left undisturbed, will continue to do so for millions of years. Our coasts provide great beauty and critical plant and wildlife habitat; protect communities from rising sea levels and damaging storm surges; and generate billions of dollars through tourism, fisheries, and other economic development activity. The Garden Club of America believes in protecting coastal areas and oceans from pollution and environmental degradation, including the impacts of climate change (such as warming seas, ocean acidification, and rising sea levels) using best management practices.

The Garden Club of America supports federal, state, and local legislation, policy, and individual action that address the following:

POLLUTION REDUCTION

- Promote initiatives that protect, conserve, and maintain water quality and quantity, and prevent stormwater runoff, from combined sewer overflows, agricultural runoff, and other pollution caused by human activity (e.g. discharges from manufacturing, mining, drilling, and transportation).
- Encourage measures that support responsible waste management practices and that reduce the growth of plastic in our oceans
- Through education and legislation, limit where possible single-use plastics that pollute our coasts and harm sea life and encourage innovation in the development of biodegradable alternatives to plastics in packaging and consumer goods.
- Lower the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂), and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere to reduce ocean warming and acidification which pose an increasingly greater risk to sea life.

FUNDING

- Advocate for adequate funding of ocean and coastal programs including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's ocean programs, and those of other government agencies charged with the protection of oceans and coasts.
- Support funding strategies to protect the ocean and coastal biodiversity, especially for at-risk species, to safeguard habitat and preserve options for future restoration.
- Encourage and support research efforts to promote the conservation of both tidal and non-tidal wetlands.
- Support the allocation of public resources to address the effects of climate change, ocean acidification, and the loss of the world's coral reefs.
- Advocate for mitigation and adaptation funding for coastal areas affected by climate change.

SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

- Participate in the development of initiatives to protect coastal habitats, waters, and oceans.
- Support a transition to the use of clean energy systems while shifting from the use of fossil fuels.
- Support core conservation components and science-based fisheries management outlined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to ensure that US fisheries continue to provide a sustainable, healthy, and secure share of the U.S. food system.

ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

- Promote conservation, education, and the sustainable preservation of the US National Marine Sanctuary and other marine protected areas that help to sequester carbon, support biodiversity, and provide refuge for species facing changing ocean conditions.
- Advocate for the preservation of the Antiquities Act of 1906 to protect historic and cultural sites on coastal land and in the oceans.
- Work to protect oceans, coastal areas, and marine life from damaging practices, pollution, and the effects of climate change.